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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [KV](#)
SUBJECT: OUTGOING KFOR COMMANDER GIVES SOBERING ASSESSMENT
OF EULEX DEPLOYMENT, CALLS FOR KFOR-EULEX-UNMIK COOPERATION

REF: USNATO 000312

Classified By: A/DCM W. Scott Reid for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY & COMMENT: Outgoing Kosovo Force (KFOR) commander Lieutenant General de Marnhac on 3 September told NATO Perm Reps and non-NATO KFOR contributors that KFOR needed adapted guidance from the NAC and that getting working arrangements right between KFOR, the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), and the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was critical. He warned that, in the current ambiguous environment, KFOR could rapidly find itself in the role of first responder on primary security. LTG de Marnhac said Kosovar Serbs are not willing to allow EULEX into northern Kosovo at present and that KFOR faced a challenge in engaging Kosovar Albanians, Serbs, and Belgrade and maintaining its impartiality. The Secretary General seconded LTG de Marnhac's call for Allies to provide resources for KFOR's new tasks. De Marnhac's sobering assessment--especially on the difficulty of EULEX deploying to the north and the possibility that KFOR may become first responder by default--contrasted with EULEX Head of Mission de Kermabon's more optimistic briefing to the NAC the day before (reftel).
END SUMMARY & COMMENT

LOOKING FOR OPLAN REVISION

¶2. (C) Outgoing Kosovo Force (KFOR) commander Lieutenant General de Marnhac on 3 September briefed NATO Perm Reps and non-NATO KFOR contributors on KFOR. SACEUR General Craddock introduced LTG de Marnhac, noting that he has performed ably over the past year and most recently in engaging on the transition between the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) in the absence of political guidance. LTG de Marnhac reviewed KFOR's efforts to ensure a safe and secure environment during his command and warned that the current environment of political ambiguity in post-independence Kosovo presents major challenges for KFOR and the international community. He advocated that KFOR maintain a pre-emptive posture and for the NAC to provide adapted guidance to KFOR in the form of an updated OPLAN that addresses KFOR's relationship with the EULEX mission.

KFOR-EULEX-UNMIK COOPERATION CRITICAL

13. (C) Ambassador Volker--along with the British and Italian Perm Reps--stressed the need for seamless coordination between KFOR, EULEX, and UNMIK. The French Perm Rep said it was essential that the Council authorized a revised Operations Plan (OPLAN) and end the "blockage" to KFOR-EULEX cooperation. LTG Marnhac stated that getting KFOR-EULEX-UNMIK working arrangements right was critical because KFOR had less maneuver space in the current environment and could easily be forced into the role of first responder to security incidents.

TURKEY IRKED BY FRANCE

14. (C) During the Allies-only NAC meeting that followed, the Turkish Perm Rep expressed his disappointment at the French reference to a blockage, which he said he assumed was directed at Turkey. He said the issue of the OPLAN should have been "for Allies ears only" and urged EU states to examine how they could address Turkey's complaints about its relationship with ESDP rather than criticizing Turkey in front of non-Allies. (Comment: Whether or not this was a rookie misstep by a new French NATO team or a calculated EU Presidency step, it misfired clearly and will not improve the atmosphere to cajole flexibility out of Ankara. End Comment.)

EULEX MOVE INTO NORTH NOT POSSIBLE AT PRESENT

15. (C) In contrast to EULEX Head of Mission de Kermabon's brief at NATO yesterday (see reftel), LTG Marnhac was pessimistic about EULEX's prospects for deploying into northern Kosovo, saying he saw no willingness by Kosovar Serbs to accept EULEX. In case EULEX is unable to move into the north, KFOR will have the additional challenge of working with UNMIK in the north and EULEX elsewhere, a difficulty compounded by the fact that EULEX will have a very different mission than UNMIK. In response to Ambassador Volker's query about the possibility of a security gap, LTG Marnhac said UNMIK would remain in force in the north but he was uncertain how events would transpire at the end of the transition period. KFOR could find itself placed in a position of first responder. As much as possible, KFOR must operate outside of its camps and prevent problems before they arise.

KFOR NEEDS BALANCED APPROACH AT REGIONAL LEVEL

16. (C) LTG de Marnhac said the conflict between the Kosovo constitution and the Serbian agenda was a key challenge. KFOR needs to work with increasingly assertive Kosovar authorities on issues previously handled by UNMIK and engage productively with Belgrade and Kosovar Serbs. Responding to a German question about the extent of Belgrade's influence in northern Kosovo, LTG Marnhac assessed that the radical elements that dominate in the north were largely out of the current Serbian government's control. Belgrade is taking steps to gain control but LTG Marnhac expected that the radicals would react strongly and probably violently. He predicted that his successor "will be tested" in coming weeks or months. He indicated, however, that success by Belgrade, should it materialize, would be a very positive development that could allow NATO to begin reassessing KFOR's force posture.

17. (C) The Norwegian Perm Rep noted de Marnhac's comment that KFOR's new tasks of standing up the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and demobilizing the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) could compromise KFOR's partiality. He then suggested that KFOR should be proactive in its public diplomacy efforts to explain its role in these tasks to Belgrade and Kosovar Serbs. LTG de Marnhac said that NATO and KFOR needed to

stress that the new tasks were another contribution to the security and stability of Kosovo and to convince Belgrade that it was in Serbia's interests for the KSF to be under the strong control of NATO.

CALLING FOR MORE RESOURCES FOR NEW TASKS

18. (C) LTG de Marnhac said KFOR has good relations with the KSF but NATO must deliver the manpower and funds necessary to stand up the organization. He also said that standing down the KPC was a sensitive process--particularly with regard to pensions for KPC members who were not being picked up by the KSF--that had to be handled wisely. The Secretary General responded with a plea for Allies to come forward with more funds for the KSF and KPC Trust Funds. He said the KSF Trust Fund was currently funded at 200,000 euros, sufficient only to conduct medical screening of KSF applicants.

VOLKER